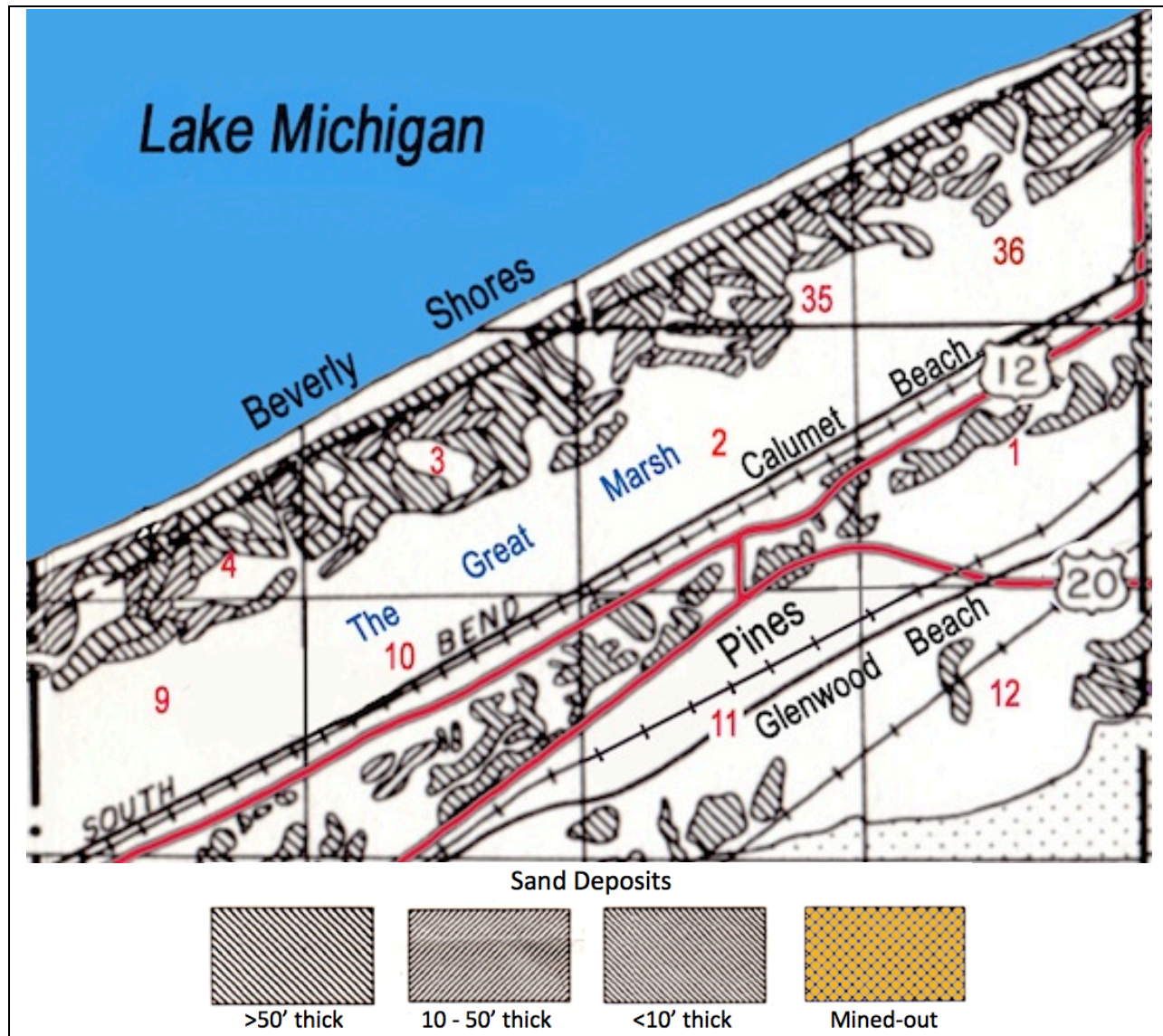


## Chapter 8

### Sand Mining Porter County: Pine Township



Adapted from Bieber and Smith, 1952<sup>1</sup>

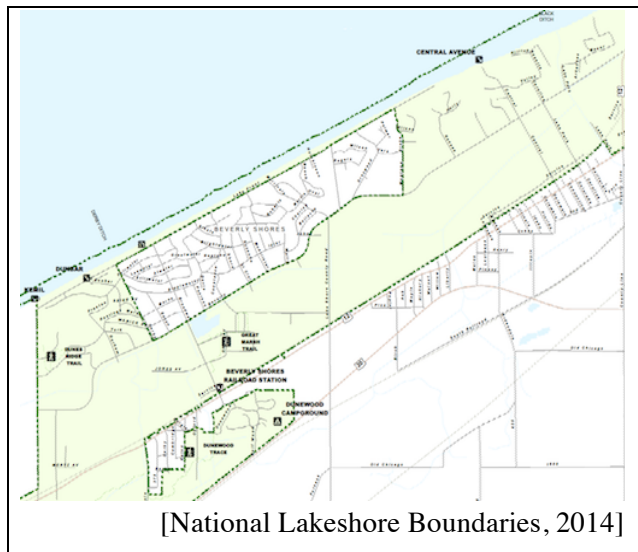
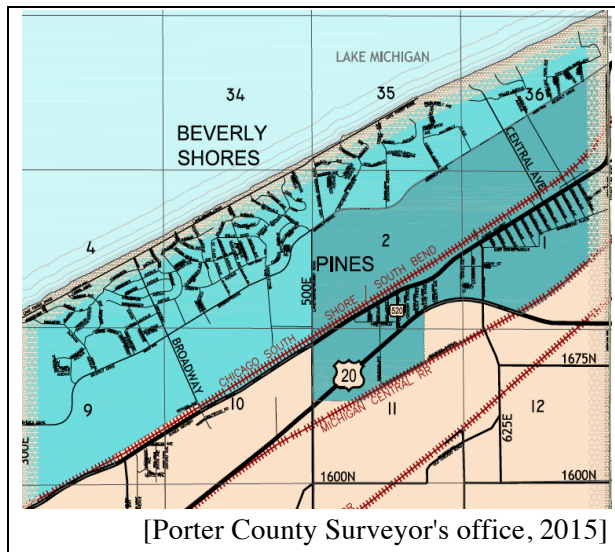
Pine Township has not had large amounts of sand mining largely because it was further from Chicago customers than were Lake County or Portage Township, there were no rail lines north of the Great Marsh, and because there was plenty of sand and rail lines in neighboring LaPorte County. There were, however, a few isolated mining locations; they are discussed below.

<sup>1</sup> Sections 35 and 36 are in Township 38 North, Range 5 West. The remainder of the sections are in Township 37 North, Range 5 West.

## Beverly Shores and Pines (Sections 35, 36, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9)

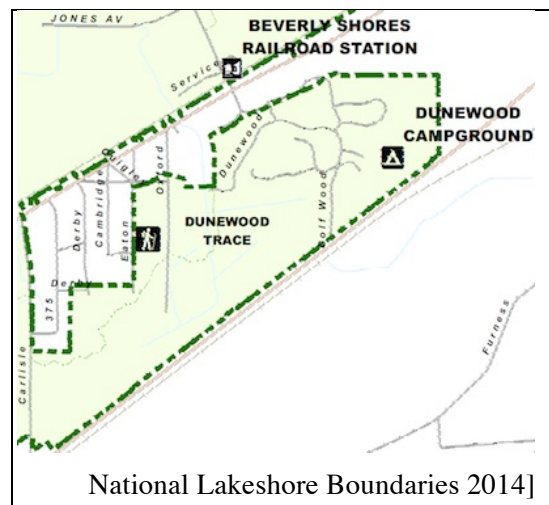
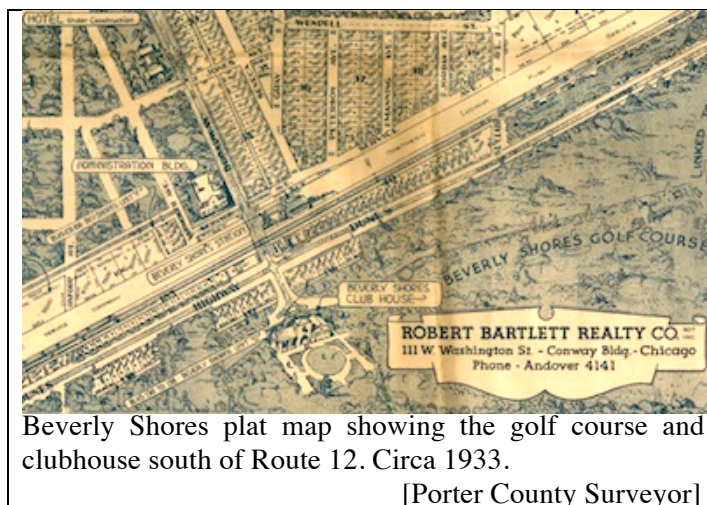
Beverly Shores and Pines were both platted after the Dunes Highway was built in 1922-23. Before that, much of the land south of the dunes was agricultural. The earliest crop, cranberries, thrived in its marshy soils. Nevertheless, many ditches were, as early as the 1870s, dug to drain the Great Marsh and cranberries were replaced by other crops. Pines was platted south of the new highway in 1923.

Beverly Shores, which extends across the entire width of Pine Township, was platted in 1929. A much larger development, roads were graded, houses and commercial establishments built, and a golf course created south of U.S. 12. There were no railroads north of the Great Marsh and so there were no major sand excavations in the town. Nevertheless, Broadway and other streets were flattened; there was extensive minor reshaping of the land in order to turn the “wild” dunes into a town. Parts of the less densely developed sections of both towns were incorporated into the National Lakeshore.



## Dunewood Campground (Section 10)

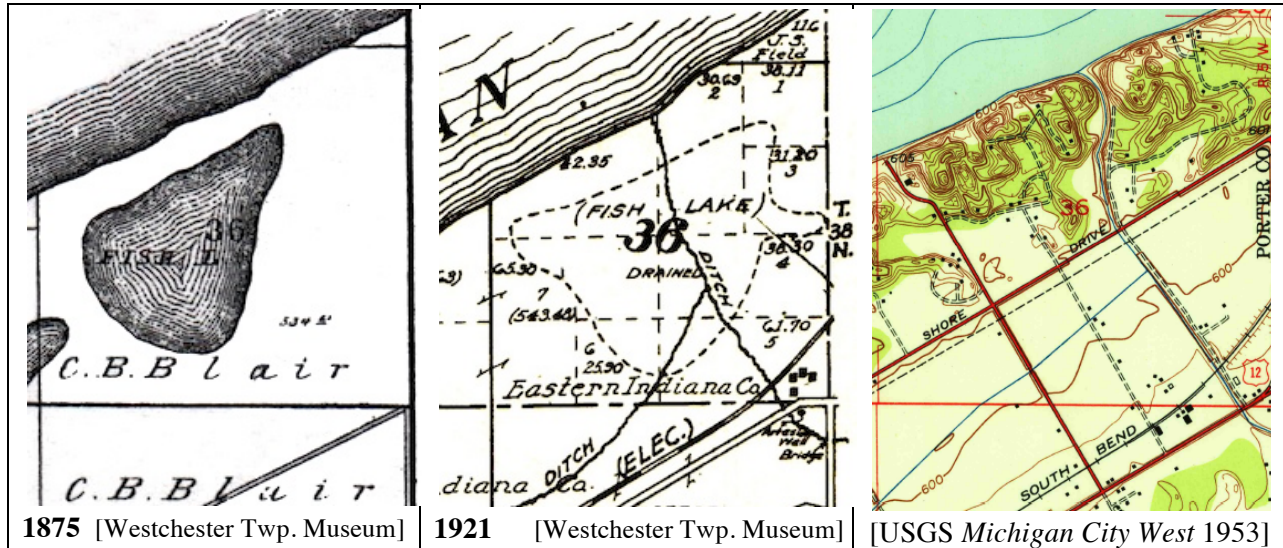
Dunewood Campground occupies the site of what had been the Beverly Shores golf course. The course closed during World War II and never reopened. It became one of the parcels added to the national park in the 1980 and was designated its new campground. Its topography was altered when the course and clubhouse were built in the 1930s. Thus the campground, which relieved the often filled-to-capacity state park campground, was established on already-disturbed land.



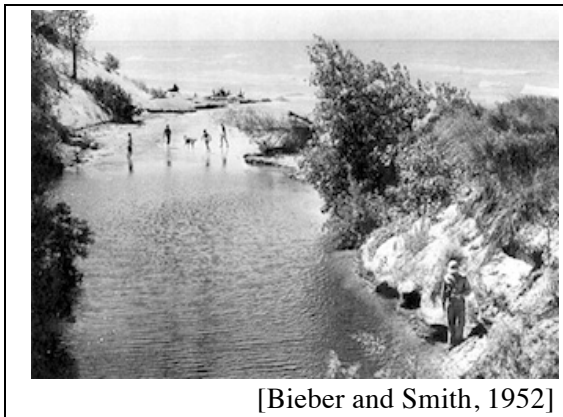


### Kintzele Ditch (Section 36 and N¼ Section 1)

In the mid-nineteenth century, Chauncey B. Blair purchased much of the land across the northern portion of Pine Township—adjacent to land he owned in LaPorte County.<sup>2</sup> The ground was sandy, poorly drained, and, besides the Great Marsh, contained several small lakes including the 300-acre<sup>3</sup> Fish Lake in the far northeast corner of the township. The dunes shown on the topographic map below (right) show that the lake could not have been quite as large as what was shown on the plat maps made 75 and 32 years earlier.



According to State Geologist David Dale Owen, who visited the area in 1859-1860, at some time previous to then Blair “had successfully drained several thousand acres of swamps.”<sup>4</sup> Likely much earlier, but at least by 1882, Blair had drained Fish Lake and turned the land into what historian George Garard called a “fine cranberry plantation.”<sup>5</sup> This is probably when at least the northern portion of Kintzele Ditch was excavated up to Lake Michigan. Other ditches were dug, and some dams built to control the flow of water.<sup>6</sup>



[Bieber and Smith, 1952]



[NPS: Jeff Manuszak, 2010]

<sup>2</sup> Conard, 1891. Blair also owned Mount Baldy and Crescent Dune, which were much closer to rail transportation.

<sup>3</sup> Plampin, 2011, p. 6. See her article for more information about early history and native plants in the area.

<sup>4</sup> Owen, 1862. P. 202.

<sup>5</sup> Garard, 1882, p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> Blair had five cranberry marshes on his land and in 1882 harvested 2,000 bushels, which, according to the Michigan City *Dispatch* (Oct. 12, 1882), then sold for \$3.00 a bushel-- Nicewarner, 1980, p. 110.

### Sand Pits South of the Town of Pines (NE¼ Section 11 and NW¼ Section 12)

Sand pits, just south of the Town of Pines, are well known to Indiana geologists as it was here that the remains of an ancient spruce forest was found—under the sand being mined!

Mining at the eastern pit (upper map) was visited in 1950 by Bieber who noted that it had been underway for some time then. It was then being done by the Brown Trucking Company. The sand there was only 3½ feet thick and Bieber estimated that that pit would be worked out by the fall of that year.<sup>7</sup> This is one of the few pits where some gravel had been excavated. That gravel was deposited on the beach during Lake Michigan's Glenwood phase. Mining at the western pit (in Sections 12 and the adjacent area in Section 11) was underway by 1953.

Attempted mining in Section 11, north of the New York Central tracks (#1 on the lower map) had to

stop in the mid-1980s when a layer of spruce logs was found under the ground sand being excavated. These logs were from spruce trees that were growing here roughly 12,000 years ago when this area was an interdunal wetland during a low-water stage of Lake Michigan. During the subsequent Calumet stage, the trees were buried by sand. This site was turned into what was called the “Yard 520 landfill.” It is now closed, restricted, and under Indiana Department of Environmental Management oversight. South of this site was once an unregulated dump.

Today there are two landfills and that former dump within or south of the town limits of Pines (shaded in yellow and numbered on the 1994 map). Except for the areas around the two sand pits marked on the 1953 map, they were not preceded by much removal of sand. Site number 2 is a closed Waste Management site.

Site 3 on the map had a pond excavated and was home of Folmer Nybe who operated site #2 and sold it to Waste Management.



Brown's sand pits

[USGS Michigan City West, 1953]



The Brown sand pit site.

[USGS Michigan City West, 1994]

<sup>7</sup> Bieber, field notes, July 27, 1950.